

News from the Oklahoma National Guard

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For Immediate Release

Thunderbirds Begin Arriving Home

Story by Spc. Anthony Jones, Print Journalist, Oklahoma National Guard Office of Public Affairs.

One year after Soldiers of Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team said goodbye to their loved ones, the more than 2,600 "Thunderbirds" are returning home from the largest single deployment of Oklahoma Army National Guard troops since the Korean War.

The 45th IBCT was mobilized October 18, 2007, and spent approximately four months at Fort Bliss, Texas, where the Brigade underwent extensive, mission-specific, training, preparing the Soldiers to guard detainees and operate forward operating bases in Iraq.

After completing their training at Fort Bliss the Thunderbirds moved to Iraq where they performed a variety of missions including security operations at Camp Bucca, Iraq's largest detainee facility, and day-to-day operations in the International Zone, formerly the Green Zone, in Baghdad.

"The Soldiers of the 45th should take great pride in themselves," said Maj. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, Adjutant General for Oklahoma. "They were asked to perform missions outside the common task of an infantry brigade and not only accepted but excelled. All Oklahomans should be proud of their Thunderbird heroes."

The Soldiers of the 45th IBC T will be arriving home over the next week in groups of approximately 200 to 300 personnel to a heroes welcome at the Southern Nazarene University Campus's Sawyer Center located at 6729 NW 39th Expressway, Bethany, Okla.